

How pollinator-friendly is my landscape?

Creating a better world for pollinators starts in your own backyard. Pollinator-friendly landscapes benefit our food systems, increase biodiversity and beautify what we see every day. How pollinator-friendly is your yard and garden? Take five minutes to complete this survey from U of M Extension to find out how your backyard measures up on plants, habitat and gardening practices that help bees and other beneficial insects.

Pollinator sightings

Plants need insects - especially bees – to move pollen from one plant to another. An abundance of pollinators will increase fruit and vegetable production as well as flowering and seeds.

Have you seen any of the following bees in your landscape? Check all that apply. (2 points each)

- Honey bees Bumble bees Other native bees

Flies, butterflies and moths, beetles and wasps are secondary pollinators. They may carry a little pollen from plant to plant as feed on nectar, find a mate or prey on smaller insects. Do you ever see these other pollinators in your yard and garden? Check all that apply. (1 point each)

- Wasps Butterflies & moths Beetles Flies

Flower diversity

Flowers provide nectar (carbohydrates) and pollen (protein) for bees and other pollinators, so it's important to have something blooming from early spring through late fall in your garden.

Do you have flowers (including trees and shrubs) blooming during the following months? Check all that apply. (1 point each)

- April May June July August September October

Do you grow flowers that vary in shapes, sizes, and colors? Check all that apply.

- I grow flowers of different shapes (1 pt)
 I grow flowers of different sizes (1 pt)
 I grow flowers of different colors (1 pt)
 I don't grow flowers in my landscape (-3 pts)

Native plants have evolved to attract pollinators and provide food and habitat. Do you have Minnesota native flowers growing in your landscape?

- I grow only native plants (1 pt)
 I grow a combination of native and non-native plants. (1 pt)
 I do not grow any native plants (-1 pt)
 I am not sure if I have any native plants growing in my landscape (0 pts)

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Nesting areas

Bees need places where they can safely raise their young. Some bees use dried-out plant stems and some tunnel underground to build their nests.

Stem-nesting bees build nests and overwinter in hollow flower stems. One way to provide shelter for bees is to just remove the dead flowers and leave the long stems standing. Is this something you do in your landscape?

- Yes (1 pt) No (-1 pt) Not sure (0 pts)

Most bees build underground nests in undisturbed sandy soil locate in the sun. What do you if you see ground nesting bees in your yard?

- I leave them alone (1 pt) I've never seen ground-nesting bees. (0 pts) I kill them. (-2 pt)

Pest and weed control

Ideally, a “pollinator-friendly landscape” does not include any chemicals such as pesticides (insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, etc.). Research has shown that chemicals used to control insects, fungus or weeds in the landscape, may be toxic to bees and other pollinators.

How do you decide whether or not to use chemicals in your landscape?

- I never use chemicals in my landscape. (3 pts)
 I might use a chemical if I think a plant will die from a disease or insect damage. (0 pts)
 I use chemicals in my landscape regularly to prevent diseases and insect damage. (-3 pts)
 I am not sure if chemicals are used applied in my landscape. (0 pts)

Your Pollinator-Friendly Score: _____

If you scored less than 7: You are a **Wanna Bee** Pollinator Gardener with lots of room to grow! Make the upcoming season your pollinator garden season! Be observant to see what insects live in your landscape. Plant a diversity of flowers that provide pollen and nectar for pollinators and will provide season-long bloom. Use Plants for Minnesota Bees from the U of M Bee Squad and the Plant Elements of Design plant database to choose plants for pollinators that will grow well in your landscape. Make the effort to reduce or even eliminate your pesticide use. Before reaching for a pesticide, diagnose your problem using the U of M Extension Garden webpage diagnostic tools: “*What’s wrong with my plant?*”, “*What insect is this?*”, and “*Is this plant a weed?*”

If you scored 8 – 16: You are a **Bee Benefactor!** You are off to a great start! Learn to identify pollinators and keep a record of the pollinators you see in your garden. You most likely have flowers that bloom most of the season that are attractive to pollinators. Supplement these with Minnesota native flowers, native seed mixes and ornamental grasses that feed butterfly larvae. Plant for bloom in those months (early spring, early summer, and late fall) when flowers are less abundant. Use Plants for Minnesota Bees from the U of M Bee Squad and the Plant Elements of Design plant database to choose plants for pollinators that will grow well in your landscape. Consider how you can create nesting sites for bees in your landscape.

If you scored 17 or higher: You are a **Pollinator Protector** and it sounds like your landscape is pollinator-friendly! You have probably observed a variety of pollinators thanks to your abundance of flowers, tree and shrubs that bloom in your landscape for most of the growing season and provide healthy pollen and nectar. You may have nesting areas, and you have eliminated pesticides. You can still do more! Plant large masses of pollinator-friendly flowers for more variety and bloom and nesting habitat. Participate in citizen science programs like the [Great Sunflower Project](#), the [Bumble Bee Watch](#), the [Minnesota Bumble Bee Survey](#) or statewide [Minnesota Bee Atlas](#).